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him, and upon whom he depended in his peril. Livingstone's peril consisted in being left without the means of transport; and probably, if not sought for, we should hear of some of his small party being alive hereafter, just as we had heard within the last few days that members of Von der Decken's expedition were alive, twelvemonths after they were reported to have been slain.

The PRESIDENT said the Geographical Society took upon themselves the initiative in the search, but hoped for the assistance of Government, whose bounden duty it was to take a deep interest in the fate of one of their own officers, for Dr. Livingstone had been appointed Her Majesty's Consul to all the independent chiefs in the interior of Africa. With regard to the supposed survivors of the Baron von der Decken's expedition, alluded to by Capt. Osborn, this news was communicated in the following despatch from H.M. Political Agent at Aden:—

“Aden, Feb. 19, 1867.

“Mahomed Humal, the interpreter at the police court, who went last spring on leave to his native country, near Berbera, has returned. He reports that he sent four messengers to Nyadhira, in the hope of obtaining good information about the men of the St. Abbs, said to be in captivity among the Gallas. One messenger had died, one was still up the country, but two had returned without being able to get any tidings about the ‘St. Abbs’ people. They had, however, heard that four Europeans, described as one Nakhoda,\* and three men, were in confinement among the Droosah. It was said they had been seized from a small iron steamboat in the Waber (Juba), near a mountain pass called ‘Jub-i-dug.’ If there is any truth in this story, these will be a portion of Baron von der Decken's unfortunate expedition. I have sent again to have further inquiries made. The Mijerteyn Sultan, from whom I expected the best and most reliable information, died, I regret to say, last summer. His death stayed for the time inquiries in that direction, but I have requested his successor to cause them to be carried on.”

The following papers were then read:—

- 1.—*On part of Mesopotamia, between Sheriat-el-Beytha, on the Tigris, to Tel Ibrahim.* By Lieutenant J. B. BEWSHER, Surveyor in Mesopotamia.

THE paper consisted of extracts of the official report of Lieutenant Bewsher, and described the various objects of interest, ancient sites, and canals, examined in his portion of the Mesopotamia Survey, which was taken up by Commander Selby and himself in the autumn of 1862.

The ancient canals, as a rule, appear to have had low banks, but raised slightly above the surrounding level. They generally wind considerably, and have ruins on their banks, often lining them for miles. In some places, near large ruins, they appear to have had regularly-built sides. From them irrigants were given off and led over the country in every possible direction. The author gave further details with respect to the Abu Ghurraib, the Nahr Aeesa, the Saklawiyeh, and other of the more important of these ancient canals.

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\* English master.

The author also discussed the site of Kunaxa, which he believed to be near the mound now called Kuneeseh, four miles to the westward of Senadiyeh. Chesney and Ainsworth, who had been over the same ground, had not noticed the name of Kuneeseh, which was the more remarkable, as this mound seems to correspond with that called Abu Ghurraib in the map of the expedition under Chesney. Kuneeseh is the Arabic for "church;" Lieutenant Bewsher believed the name Kunaxa might be a corruption of it, and that the great battle described by Xenophon was actually fought at this spot. The mound of Kuneeseh is 17 miles from Felujah, and  $51\frac{1}{4}$  miles in a direct line from Babel, the northern mound of those marking the supposed site of Babylon. This agrees pretty nearly with the 500 stadia of Plutarch, which he gives as the distance between the two places. The author maintained that there was nothing in Xenophon's account of the advance or retreat of the Greeks that would disprove the supposition. The hypothesis was further confirmed by the existence of a pebbly ridge or mound, near Kuneeseh, 13 miles long and 80 feet high, which might be the hill mentioned by Xenophon as that on which Artaxerxes' cavalry made a stand after retreating from the Greeks. The position of Sittaki was next discussed, and that of the Median wall of Xenophon. With regard to the supply of water for the great irrigating canals, which always formed so remarkable a feature of this part of Mesopotamia, the author showed that it was derived from the Euphrates only, its bed being higher than that of the Tigris, and its water consequently being easily led over the plain.

The paper will be published *in extenso* in the 'Journal,' vol. xxxvii.

The PRESIDENT, in returning thanks to Lieutenant Bewsher, congratulated the Society on this addition to our knowledge of the Comparative Geography of Mesopotamia by an Indian officer, who had followed the admirable example of Sir Henry Rawlinson, to whom the Gold Medal of the Society was awarded when Major Rawlinson—for his paper upon Ecbatana. The devotion to these branches of research did honour to the officers of the Indian Service. Seeing Captain Selby present, who was the chief of this surveying expedition, and to whom the Society were much indebted many years ago for a valuable communication respecting the mouth of the Euphrates, and the district south of the country surveyed by Lieutenant Bewsher, he hoped to hear from him and other gentlemen some remarks upon the paper which had been read.

Captain SELBY stated that he and Lieutenant Collingwood many years ago completed a chart of Mesopotamia, in seven sheets, which he forwarded in 1862 to the Government; but they are not now to be found, and all the efforts made since that time to discover what had become of those charts had been ineffectual. With regard to the subject of the paper, he believed that in the course of his survey he discovered, at a district called Dura, the site of the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar the King set up. It consisted of a conical brick mound, about sixty feet in height, and seven feet square at the summit. He found by triangulation that it was twelve miles from the

King's palace at Babylon, and twelve miles from what he believed was the temple of Belus.

Sir HENRY RAWLINSON.—The Temple of the Seven Spheres.

Captain SELBY.—If the golden image was seven or eight feet high on the top of this mound, it would be visible at twelve miles' distance when the rays of the rising sun were falling upon it. The people who inhabited Babylon, at the sound of musical instruments, would fall down and worship the image just visible on the horizon. With regard to the Euphrates, he found that it flowed very nearly, within 150 yards, the same course that it formerly did, for its course in ancient times could be distinctly traced. All the streams had a tendency to flow to the south-east, owing to the slope of the land in that direction, and the Euphrates was no exception to the rule. Lieut. Bewsher had spoken of the wall he had discovered, and which he supposed to be the Median wall; having read what was said by Herodotus, he (Capt. Selby) could not but believe that this was part of the wall of Babylon. It was six feet wide, with bastions at intervals. The account which had been given of the cause of the loss of the water of the Euphrates was perfectly true. A channel was originally cut by a pious Mahomedan, to carry the waters of the Euphrates to the town of Moshid Ali; but, no care being taken, the stream gradually enlarged, and at last became a vast river. Four or five years ago Omar Pasha attempted to dam it, but the next year the current carried away the banks on either side of the dam, which is standing at the present day, and the waters spread over the adjacent plains. The Euphrates as a navigable river no longer exists. And there was cause for apprehension that the Tigris, like the Euphrates, would be lost in the same way, unless a more energetic government than the Turkish took measures to prevent such a catastrophe.

Sir HENRY RAWLINSON said he was very glad the labours of the gentlemen who had addressed the meeting had now been brought to the knowledge of English geographers, for such labours had been previously but little appreciated or even known. This was one of the services which the Geographical Society rendered to science, giving opportunities to gentlemen of making their knowledge available, which would otherwise be lost to the world. During a residence of twelve years in Mesopotamia he (Sir Henry) had had abundant opportunities of seeing the work of these Indian officers in connection with the survey of the country. He alluded especially to Captains Jones, Selby, and Collingwood, and Lieut. Bewsher; and he had no hesitation in saying that their labours were in the highest degree creditable, not only to themselves, but to the Indian navy, to which noble service—now, alas! abolished—they had belonged. The country to which Lieut. Bewsher's paper referred was the cradle of civilization; in it were first cultivated, contemporaneously with a similar cultivation in Egypt, the natural sciences and that study of art which afterwards spread through the world, through the instrumentality of the Greeks. Throughout Babylonia there were a number of important sites. Among the most ancient were Babylon and Kutha. He believed he was the first European who had visited the ruins of the famous city of Kutha. It was the place from whence the Babylonian colonists were transported to Samaria. Kutha was mentioned several times in the Bible, and the Jews had always called the Samaritans Kutheans, in reference to the original colonization. The ruins were now popularly called Tel-Ibrahim, that is, "the Mount of Abraham," Kutha being supposed to be the capital of Nimrod, and a tradition prevailing all through the East that Abraham was here thrown into the fire by Nimrod. This tradition seemed to have sprung from a false reading of the verse in Genesis, where it is said Abraham came out of Ur of the Chaldees. As Ur also meant fire, the passage was translated in the Chaldee Targums "came out of the fire of the Chaldees:" and as, if the patriarch came out of the fire, he must first have been thrown into it, there had been invented, in connexion

with this fire, a series of fables as to the adventures of Abraham at the court of Nimrod. Kutha, as the traditional capital of Nimrod, also furnished another Biblical illustration. Nimrod, being a great hunter, was identified in the popular superstition with the god of hunting, who was called in the old mythology Nergal, and when therefore it was said in Scripture that the men of Kutha made Nergal, it really gave an historical explanation of the myth through which the ruins at the present day bore the name of the Patriarch Abraham. He might mention that the first time he visited this place, Tel-Ibrahim, it happened to be a clear day, and he thus succeeded in taking a bearing of the great ruin at Ctesiphon, twenty-three miles in direct distance, with an ordinary theodolite. Capt. Selby had spoken of the tendency of the Euphrates to run off to the south-east, owing to the slope of the land in that direction. It was, in fact, only kept in its course by extensive dams, and this had always been the case from the remotest antiquity, every governor of the province, in ancient as well as in modern times, having been thus occupied in damming up the river so as to prevent its draining off. Alexander, indeed, lost his life from this very circumstance; for, in connexion with this work of repairing the dams, he was obliged to sail down into the marshes, where he caught the fever of which he subsequently died. There was, he might add, a perfect network of canals between the two rivers, and the water of both was formerly consumed in irrigation. The whole country, indeed—an area of 500 miles in length and 200 in breadth—was in former times one vast expanse of cultivation: it was now a sterile desert. He had mentioned, at a former meeting of the Society, that in consequence of this change in the physical aspect of the country the very climate had altered. When the water was thrown over the face of the country there were date-groves scattered over its entire surface; those date-groves attracted the clouds, and thus there were constant rains and showers during all seasons of the year. We never read in the 'Arabian Nights,' or in any of the old Arabic authors, of complaints of great heat. On the contrary, the gardens of Bagdad appeared in the eighth and ninth centuries to have been most agreeable places, where Haroun-al-Raschid and his officers enjoyed themselves amazingly; whereas at the present day the country was almost uninhabitable from May to October, in consequence of the excessive heat and aridity. In his house at Bagdad, the thermometer had stood at 125°, and in the sun outside it had been 170°. The natural advantages of the country were great, and, with the opening up of the old canals and the construction of other works of irrigation, and with security to life and property, the country would become again extremely productive, requiring very little ploughing or manuring. It was, moreover, a very favourable country for cotton. He had been assured that recently the cultivation of cotton had been very much increased, and that some specimens from the vicinity of Busorah would compare with a very good quality of Sea-Island cotton from America.

Captain FELIX JONES said he had resided in Mesopotamia for a very long period, associated with Sir Henry Rawlinson and others, and would have liked to enter upon the subject of Lieut. Bewsher's paper. The clock, however, warned him there was no time left for minute topographical details, such as the identity of the site of Kunaxa required. As to the country itself, Sir Henry had been so very lucid and complete in his description, that he had really left others little to say. Lieutenant Bewsher's portion of the survey was a most creditable performance, and deserved praise, even though we might differ from his conclusions on certain minor points.

Mr. LYNCH had only one observation to make: it was with regard to the Median wall. He thought that point was settled by Captain Lynch and Dr. Ross many years ago; he visited it himself in company with these gentlemen in 1844. It extended from the western bank of the Tigris from above Istabalat—nearly opposite Kadesevah and the ruins of Opis on the further

bank—along the edge of the tertiary formation, towards Feluga on the Euphrates, forming, he might say, the northern boundary of the alluvial plain of that part of Mesopotamia. It was built of masses of concrete and stone; no bricks, as in lower Mesopotamia, and had a ditch and glacis; and no one who had walked along it for several miles and seen that magnificent dyke extending as far as the eye could see, could doubt that that was the Median wall. It certainly appeared so to him, and it was a point of very great interest, as fixing a position in comparative geography there; for almost the whole of the lower part of Mesopotamia was one alluvial plain, the features of which had been often changed by inundations, and sites of ancient places rendered very doubtful indeed. However, the four canals mentioned by Xenophon could still be traced with great accuracy, in their ramifications throughout the whole country, which, with the Median wall, were the landmarks for the modern geographer.

Captain JONES said he must differ from Mr. Lynch as to the Median wall. It was true Captain Lynch—than whom a better surveyor does not exist—and Dr. Ross visited that part of Mesopotamia shortly after Colonel Chesney's expedition; but they had mistaken a dam for the Median wall, not having traced it to its extremity. He (Captain Jones) afterwards visited it; and, notwithstanding the opposition made by the Arabs, he succeeded in reaching the end of it, and he could positively state that it was not the Median wall, for reasons already fully given in his 'Researches in the Vicinity of the Median Wall of Xenophon, and Discovery of the Site of the ancient Opis.'

Mr. J. CRAWFORD believed there could be no doubt that very good cotton might be grown in Mesopotamia; but they must first get rid of the Turks, and then they must get rid of the Arabs, who were not quite so bad. If the country were well governed, and if the soil were well watered, there was no reason why Mesopotamia should not be as fertile as Lombardy, Bengal, or the valley of the Nile. At present, notwithstanding the high premium that had been put upon the cultivation of cotton by the American civil war, there had been very little grown in Mesopotamia, only a patch here and there; and, as long as the Turks were there, the production could never take place on a large scale.

## 2. *On the Sources and Course of the Lycus, and other Rivers in Kurdistan.*

By J. E. TAYLOR, Esq., H.M. Consul, Diarbekr.

[This communication has been printed entire in 'Additional Notices,' 'Proceedings,' vol. xi. No. 2.]

Captain JONES said Mr. Taylor's more extended paper would throw great light on that portion of Kurdistan near the sources of the Tigris. He would only add that Mr. Taylor might be depended upon for accuracy of observation and for energy in his researches.

## 3. *Description of Diarbekr.* By R. I. GARDEN, Esq.

MR. GARDEN visited Diarbekr in the year 1856, and the present paper gave an account of the principal buildings and ancient remains inspected by him during a stay of six weeks. It will be published in the 'Journal,' vol. xxxvii.

The PRESIDENT, in concluding the Meeting, announced the approaching departure of Mr. Edward Whympcr on his self-imposed mission to explore